

The Russell Leader

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GOVT. DEPT. JITTERY OVER PUBLISHING MILITARY NEWS.

If Canada is not threatened by invasion of unarmed armed forces in the near future—and there is no reason to suppose she is—then the Department of National Defence and its minister, Hon. Ian Alistair Mackenzie, is raising a nice crop of "goose pimples" which may negate any benefit, (when and if such an emergency should arise) they hope to derive from a current campaign of preparedness propaganda.

We fully subscribe to a program of military preparedness and a reasonable rearmament scheme from coast-to-coast—as past articles in these columns indicated—but we believe that that job can be done quite effectively by the Department and the Government in power without creating alarm in the minds of all residents. We also believe that such plans do not need justification by responsible men to minority opposition—if there is any concerted opposition, which we very much doubt.

There is no question but that Canada's military machine is a joke of the first water as far as utility value goes. It is dated by the Great War—and in the past 20 years a lot of water has run over the armament bridge and under the keels of the Canadian navy. Canadian men and morale would certainly stem the progress of any invasion that might come by air or water to these shores, but they would be seriously handicapped by having to use the antiquated weapons at their disposal. It is certain that Canada needs a thorough modernization of its fighting equipment—but a sum sufficient for this purpose has already been voted by Parliament—while more funds will be forthcoming as needed for defensive works and capital equipment.

Our criticism of the present situation has with two "confidential" broadsides emanating from the pen of Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, of recent date. One is directed to editors of weekly newspapers, in which he asks for deletion of all comment on proposed Canadian fortifications and specifications. The other is addressed to all Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade and such organizations—asking employers to give co-operation in the matter of granting holidays to non-permanent militiamen for training purposes, without prejudice to their positions. On this latter score there is no room for comment, unless that it was unnecessary. Canadian businessmen, as a whole, have always been patriotic enough to not interfere in any activities of their employees with regard to army activities. We cannot imagine any of them standing in the way of their young men who may desire to take part in this duty to their country and healthful discipline to themselves.

But on the point of Canadian weekly newspapermen being asked to delete news references to fortification schemes we have much to say, and mostly "Tush." In the first place, if there were any harmful purposes being served by such information it should not be put on daily press wires nor issued by the department. And as for using news matter gathered by observing reporters who are free to inspect work of the Department of Defence, we say "Tish." Alien observers have the same opportunities and privileges of inspecting this work as have Canadians, and why it should be withheld from Canadian readers and given any publicity considered worthwhile in foreign countries is beyond our comprehension.

However, perhaps even in this brief comment we have served the ends of the Department better than we know, for we have a deep conviction that the letters of Mr. Mackenzie are nothing more or less than preparedness propaganda, designed to stimulate interest in the work of the department by creating an atmosphere of apprehension and alarm over the prospects of invasion by some mythical foe.

We would like to suggest that he stir this imaginary fire very gently—lest he blow up a cloud of smoke to attract foreign powers—who have hitherto paid very little attention to the Canadian picture, but who may be invited by the recent utterances to wonder if possibly Canada might be "easy pickings". And, in conclusion, we feel that Canadian weekly editors are quite capable of judging what is in the best interests of their country—and quite prepared on their own initiative to "kill" anything that might be detrimental her welfare—but the "blue pencil" is more apt to be wielded on government dispatches than on reporters' observations.

"FIFTY YEARS AGO" ITEM WRECKS A NEWSPAPER.

Among hazardous occupations should be included that of the rural newspaper editor who publishes brief resumes of his town's history. There is dynamite in those little summaries variously entitled "Fifteen Years Ago" or "Fifty Years Ago."

The Printed Word tells of one editor who culled this feature assiduously, omitting all that might offend some subscriber.

One bit in particular he studied for a long time. It told that on this day 50 years ago, Miss Irma Clemens received highest standing in her entrance class.

The editor would, normally, not have dared to run such a dangerous piece, but he knew for a fact that Irma had been dead for many years. Further, he knew she had no close relatives still living. In his innocence, the man decided that here was one bit of news that could harm no one. So he ran the piece and it appeared in the paper the following Thursday.

Friday morning he had a caller. She was white-faced with rage.

"How do you do, Miss Crane," the editor said ingratiatingly, clearing 17 exchanges from his chair and a heap of clippings from a corner of his desk for himself, "will you sit down?"

"I will not sit down," said Miss Matilda Crane. "And what's more I want to cancel my subscription. The gall of you! Printing that piece about Irma Clemens finishing public school 50 years ago. It's libel, sir."

"But poor Miss Irma Clemens is dead and gone," returned the editor, wringing his hands. "It can't injure the deceased to give out that she was in school more than 50 years ago."

"Maybe it can't hurt Irma," said the steely-eyed Miss Crane. "But how about the fact that everybody in this town knows I was always in the same class as Irma."

NOTE AND COMMENT

How blindly most living people grope through life; only the dead get down to essences.

Said oldtime Humorist George Ade on his recent 72nd birthday: "I don't feel a day over 90."

No. 23 on a list of items "desirable for the happiness of man" compiled by Dr. Edward Lee Thorndike, educational research worker: "Something to be angry at and attack."

The question of a distinctive Canadian flag has again been introduced in the House of Commons, but this time all signs point to some definite action. Canada is the only Dominion unable to fly a flag of its own, other than the Union Jack.

At a time when all the world is complaining with justice of the high cost of living, significance attaches to a message found scribbled in pencil on a scrap of paper between the leaves of a cauliflower that was being prepared for the midday meal in a London, Eng. worker's dwelling. It read: "I got an eighth of a penny for this. What did you pay for it?" The answer was, according to dispatches, "Seven-pence." Here in a nutshell—or in a cauliflower—is a very important portion of the problem of dear food. Bringing producer and consumer together is part of its solution.

Rumor has it that for part of the increased license fee, CBC will give subscribers a new device trade named "Hush Tone," which eliminates objectionable parts of radio programs by reducing the volume 95 per cent., or to a whisper, by simply pressing a switch from any remote distance in the room. Whether the CBC contemplates this Santa Claus stunt or not to offset its growing sales of U.S. commercials over its networks, the invention will no doubt prove of popular demand by all air wave addicts who object to long-winded commercial puffs.

Told last week was a story about some Washington reporters who tried to outsmart President Roosevelt at a Press Club dinner. One the back of a menu they wrote: "I hereby nominate Herb Bratter, (a writer) as Ambassador to the North Pole." Folding the menu so that these words were hidden, they passed it to the President to autograph. When the menu was returned they discovered that Roosevelt had unfolded it, struck out "North," inserted "South," added: "North Pole already occupied."

A London daily newspaper recently conducted a search for England's typical average man. Among 5,000 aspirants who panted for this crown of mediocrity, they finally selected a 33-year-old Govt. employee who fitted down to the funniest qualification—rheumatism. His wavy hair is brown, he is 5 ft. 7 1-2 in.; his nine shirts and three suits were bought without his wife's interference. As England's Average Man he earns \$18 a week. Adhesions developed after his appendix was removed. He gets up at 7 a.m., cycles to work, smokes no more than 10 cigarettes per day, leaves punctually at 5 p.m. to cycle back again to his six-room, \$5-a-week home, which he painted cream color. There he is greeted by his plump, pink wife and only child, Peter, dines lightly, reads a serious book and newspaper, shuffles to bed at 10.30.

The Ottawa Spotlight

By Spectator

Ottawa, February 22nd.—As far as the governmental programme of legislation is concerned, the present session of parliament cannot be said to have yet got into its stride. The first two or three weeks after the debate on the speech from the throne is finished are taken up largely with private members' questions, resolutions and bills.

Among the most interesting sessions of the past week have been the resolution about having a special distinctive flag for Canada, the lively dispute over charges of electoral corruption in Canada, the demands from the social credit members that the house should discuss the sentence imposed on Mr. Unwin and Mr. Powell in Alberta as a subject of "urgent public importance" and the resolution of Mr. Gordon Ross of Moose Jaw that a special committee should be appointed to investigate the operation of our customs tariff.

It looks as if Mr. Cameron Macintosh of Saskatchewan who has been raising the flag question every session will now, or in the near future, have his way. Although the motion was still being discussed at the close of the day when it was brought up, and therefore dropped back to the foot of the list of resolutions, the idea was supported by a large number of members, including leaders. It is therefore probable that, before the session is ended, Canada will have a flag of its own. In any event it won't be very long before the flag appears. In all likelihood it will incorporate the Union Jack with special emblems of Canada. But the character and emblazoning of the flag will be worked out by a committee.

The question of electoral corruption, charged Mr. Bennett in his speech in the debate on the Throne Speech led to acrimonious debate in which members cast charges and counter charges across the floor of the house. Government spokesmen stated the charges of corruption were general. No specific charge was made of "levies on contractors." If a definite instance was given the prime minister promised he would see that a committee was appointed to investigate it. Mr. Dunning, Finance Minister, further stated the government intended to tighten up the election act to curb the heavy flow of money in electioneering, and there the matter rests for the time being.

The attempt of Mr. Blackmore, social credit leader, to have parliament discuss the Unwin-Powell case, was frustrated by the speaker's ruling.

Mr. Blackmore, however, insists he is not finished with the question. He will bring it up again as this is a matter of "great interest and importance to the people of Canada." But court judgments are court judgments and therefore to be respected; so it may be that when the question comes up again it may again be squashed by the speaker's ruling.

Supporting his request for a committee to investigate the administration of customs tariffs, Mr. Ross said that through successive changes in the Customs Act and the Customs Tariffs the authority of parliament in tariff making had been delegated to a department of the government and that through rules and regulations laid down by the department an importer of goods could not today discover by reading the tariff act what amount of duty he has to pay on his importations. The posing of a budget had become a "hollow mockery." Even customs brokers were befogged by rules and regulations of the department. Mr. Malcolm McLean, of McEfort, seconded the resolution of the member from Moose Jaw in this first outbreak of Western members on the tariff question.

Answering the attack, Mr. Isley, minister of national revenue paid a sincere tribute to the officials of his department for their "efficiency, honesty, integrity and bona fides." He explained that since last May an inter-departmental committee had been working on a revision of the Customs Act. When their work was completed they would make a report to the minister. "I shall introduce the consolidated and revised Customs Act" said Mr. Isley "at the next session of parliament."

American advertising programs carried by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation continue to be the target of criticism from the opposition. It may be that the bitter attacks in the previous parliament on the former broadcasting company may still rankle in the memories of those now occupying the opposition benches. Whether that is so or not it appears probable that the house will hear further on the present corporation during this sitting of parliament. A motion by Mr. Earl Lawson for a copy of all contracts made by the corporation for commercial programmes containing advertising originating in the United States was opposed by Mr. Howe, minister of transport, on the ground that the broadcasting corporation was an autonomous body. The house divided on the motion, which was defeated by 140 to 52, all C.C.F. and Social Credit members with the exception of one in each party voting with the Conservatives while the Government opposed in a bloc.

It begins to look as if the various parties in the opposition, the Conservatives, the C.C.F., the Social Crediters and independents will join hands on many issues in their attacks on the government. On account of their paucity of members, however, there would be little likelihood of winning on any division, if the government held its solid front.

WHAT THEY SAY ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Excerpts From Hansard

(E. J. Poole—Red Deer)

Is the government going to disallow a measure brought down in the Alberta house, a measure which definitely forms part of the mandate given to the Alberta government in 1935, and which they are entitled to carry out, and on the other hand allow Quebec to get away with the padlock law, which deprives sections of Canadian citizens of the right to express themselves?

In Canada we have heard a cry raised against people who are classed as radicals or communists. May I point out to hon. gentlemen on the ministerial benches and to the private members of the house that while they are in the city of Ottawa they ought to visit the soup kitchens in this vicinity. Go into the homes of the people who are dependent upon help. We must conclude that when these people have no freedom, all this talk about freedom and democracy is stupid. Their freedom is limited by the distances they can walk, because they have no money to go anywhere else. They are denied the recreation which men and women should have, and yet they are just as worthy of consideration as presidents of insurance companies and other big business executives.

The first step the government should take should be to abolish all kinds of relief. There should be a program of national development, which could be carried out through the use of the credit which the bankers have always used. We could use our own credit and our own national resources. We should try to develop the youth of our country to make their lives happier and richer. If we do that, communism and radicalism will disappear like the mist before the morning sun.

Another condition that has developed during the past six or seven years is the lack of training of our youth. In the last few years at least four new trades have developed.

(Many Liberal members have advocated monetary reform, but they have been very quiet since they have been in power. Now is the time to do it. They will never be able to do it in opposition. All they will be able to do then will be to point out what should be done to those in power, as I am doing now.

(Hon. H. A. Stewart—Leeds)
I think the time has arrived when there should be submitted to parliament a well-considered scheme of immigration.

Parochial, provincial and sectional policies, if they ever had any value in Canada, have outlived their usefulness, and through them we cannot deal with and solve the problems that confront us to-day.

As regards unemployment insurance, I think it is long overdue.

There is in course of construction an international bridge crossing the St. Lawrence through the Thousand Islands at Ivy Lea. (This crossing is unique in that from one bridgehead to the other, including the connecting roadways, it traverses a distance of about six miles. A request has developed for the establishment of a national park at the bridgehead in Canada and another at the bridgehead in the United States. If this matter is dealt with properly by the federal government it will work to the great advantage of the dominion. I am told that about one-third of the population of Canada and about one-fourth that of the United States is within three hundred miles of the bridgehead. I need not emphasize the value of a tourist trade, and I must point out that we have here an opportunity of attracting to Canada, over this unique route, a large volume of the tourist traffic from the densely populated areas I have indicated. I do not propose to develop the matter further than to ask the government to give it careful consideration (J. S. Taylor—Nanaimo)

The British American Bank Note Company is probably able to produce as excellent a bank note as any other bank note company in the world. Then why is it, Mr. Speaker that in launching its new bilingual notes in a public issue they should be of such a nature as to cause considerable distress and demand continuous acuteness of attention because of their faulty identification? Since coming to the house this session I have already from the cash desks of the house received change for a two-dollar tender instead of a five-dollar tender. True, the error was immediately corrected, but it indicates that there is something wrong with the currency when one is liable in the rapid handling of money to make such mistakes. I think greater care should have been taken in the production of these notes, not only as to their colour, but as to their type, and I do hope that in any future printings these same mistakes will not be repeated.

In closing, and because I still have an earnest message to deliver, I must advise the government that I intend to vote for the amendment, and to the throne speech debate, not essentially because of its contents but as a definite protest against the continuance of orthodoxy in the treatment of the staggering problems of the country to-day.



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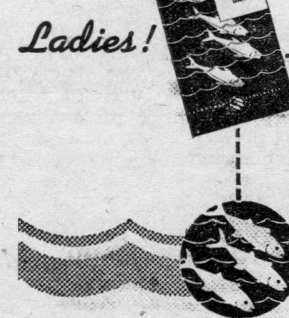
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